

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8477

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USIA WASHDC

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 0210

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PARM, UR, US

SUBJECT: PRAVDA AND KRASNAYA ZVEZDA ON SALT-II

1. SUMMARY. PRAVDA AND KRASNAYA ZVEZDA ON JANUARY 7 BOTH CARRY LENGTHY PARAPHRASED EXCERPTS FROM THE TOWNSEND HOOPES ARTICLE IN THE NEW YORK TIMES CRITICIZING THE U.S. UNOFFICIAL PROPOSAL MADE IN SEPTEMBER ON BACKFIRE AND CRUISE MISSILES. PUBLICATION OF THE ARTICLE HERE MAY BE DESIGNED TO DAMPEN ANY POSSIBLE GRUMBLING THAT SOVIET ACTIVITIES ELSEWHERE ARE ENDANGERING A SALT AGREEMENT, THOUGH OF COURSE IT DOES NOT COMMIT MOSCOW TO LINE OF ACTION EITHER ON SALT OR IN ANY OTHER OF THE PROBLEM AREAS IN U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE ARTICLE AS PUBLISHED IN THE TWO PAPERS IS SUBSTANTIALLY THE SAME AS THAT TRANSMITTED ON THE TASS ENGLISH WIRE AT 2245 MOSCOW TIME JANUARY 6. SOLE NOTABLE ADDITIONS ARE ACCU- SATIONS THAT THE "MILITARIST ELEMENTS" IN THE U.S. GOVERN- MENT ARE AGAINST PARITY; THE CONTENTION THAT BACKFIRE AND THE CRUISE MISSILES IN ANY CASE HAVE DIFFERING CAPABI-
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LITIES; AND THE CONCLUSION THAT THE U.S. "CAN MAKE A

NOTABLE CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC STABILITY AND POLITICAL COMMON SENSE BY LEAVING (THE CURISE MISSILE) GENIE IN THE BOTTLE." ALL OF THE ABOVE POINTS ARE IMPLICITLY ATTRIBUTED TO HOOPEES, AS IS INDEED THE WHOLE ARTICLE.

3. COMMENT: WE DO NOT HAVE THE TEXT OF THE HOOPEES ARTICLE AND THEREFORE CANNOT COMMENT ON SOVIET EDITING OF THE ORIGINAL. THE ARTICLE IS NOTEWORTHY, HOWEVER, FOR THE UNUSUAL DETAIL IN WHICH IT SPELLS OUT FOR THE SOVIET READERSHIP THE INS AND OUTS OF THE PRESENT NEGOTIATIONS. IN ADDITION TO BEING AN OBVIOUS TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY, FOCUSING ON THE HOOPEES ARTICLE WOULD SEEM TO BE AN EFFORT TO SHOW THAT EVEN (FORMER) U.S. DEFENSE OFFICIALS DISAGREE WITH THE U.S. NEGOTIATING POSITION IN SALT. IMPLICATION WOULD BE THAT THE BLAME FOR ANY DELAYS IN REACHING AN AGREEMENT CLEARLY BELONGS ON U.S. AND NOT SOVIET SIDE, AT A TIME WHEN OTHER SOVIET REPORTING ON THE OUTSIDE WORLD SUGGESTS THAT U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS ARE BESET BY PROBLEMS, ESPECIALLY OVER ANGOLA. THE ARTICLE COULD THUS CONCEIVABLY BE INTENDED TO DAMPEN SPECULATION HERE TO EFFECT THAT SOVIET APPROACH TO ANGOLA AND OTHER CONTENTIONS ISSUES MAY BE ENDANGERING THE MORE IMPORTANT PRIZE OF AN AGREEMENT IN SALT. HOWEVER, WHILE THE ARTICLE DOES SET THE TONE FOR SOVIET PUBLIC POSTURING ON SALT, AND POSSIBLY ON THE SALT TIE TO ANGOLA, IT OBVIOUSLY DOES NOT COMMIT MOSCOW TO ANY LINE OF ACTION ONE WAY OR THE OTHER ON EITHER OF THESE ISSUES.

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